

## **IC 12-17-19**

### **Chapter 19. Step Ahead Comprehensive Early Childhood Grant Program**

## **IC 12-17-19-1**

### **"Convener"**

Sec. 1. As used in this chapter, "convener" means:

- (1) an organization that:
  - (A) is nonprofit;
  - (B) is nongovernmental;
  - (C) is not religiously affiliated;
  - (D) operates countywide; and
  - (E) serves multiple agencies;
- (2) a school corporation (as defined in IC 20-18-2-16); or
- (3) another entity approved by the panel.

*As added by P.L.1-2005, SEC.32.*

## **IC 12-17-19-2**

### **"Coordination grant"**

Sec. 2. As used in this chapter, "coordination grant" refers to a step ahead grant awarded to initiate the development of a step ahead proposal.

*As added by P.L.1-2005, SEC.32.*

## **IC 12-17-19-3**

### **"Eligible entity"**

Sec. 3. As used in this chapter, "eligible entity" means any of the following:

- (1) A school corporation (as defined in IC 20-18-2-16).
- (2) An organization approved by the panel.
- (3) A combination of eligible entities described in subdivisions (1) and (2) under a cooperative agreement among the eligible entities.

*As added by P.L.1-2005, SEC.32.*

## **IC 12-17-19-4**

### **"Eligible program"**

Sec. 4. As used in this chapter, "eligible program" means a federal, state, local, or private program or service that serves, assists, or otherwise benefits a child and is approved by the governor and the panel under guidelines developed under section 18 of this chapter. The term includes the following programs or services:

- (1) Child care.
- (2) Preschool, including special education preschool.
- (3) Parent information, including parents as teachers programs.
- (4) School age child care (commonly referred to as latch key) as described in IC 12-17-12-5 and IC 20-26-5-1(c), including latch key services for kindergarten students.
- (5) Early identification and early intervention.
- (6) Maternal and child nutrition.

(7) Health and screening.  
*As added by P.L.1-2005, SEC.32.*

#### **IC 12-17-19-5**

##### **"Implementation grant"**

Sec. 5. (a) As used in this chapter, "implementation grant" refers to a step ahead grant that is awarded to a step ahead county to provide financial assistance to eligible entities providing eligible programs.

(b) The term includes the use of available state appropriations and available federal funds, including federal funds received under the Child Care and Development Block Grant under 42 U.S.C. 9858 et seq.

*As added by P.L.1-2005, SEC.32.*

#### **IC 12-17-19-6**

##### **"Income eligibility guidelines"**

Sec. 6. As used in this chapter, "income eligibility guidelines" refers to the income eligibility guidelines prescribed by the panel under section 18 of this chapter.

*As added by P.L.1-2005, SEC.32.*

#### **IC 12-17-19-7**

##### **"Panel"**

Sec. 7. As used in this chapter, "panel" refers to the step ahead statewide panel established by section 14 of this chapter.

*As added by P.L.1-2005, SEC.32.*

#### **IC 12-17-19-8**

##### **"Parent"**

Sec. 8. As used in this chapter, "parent" means an individual who has legal custody of a child.

*As added by P.L.1-2005, SEC.32.*

#### **IC 12-17-19-9**

##### **"Step ahead"**

Sec. 9. As used in this chapter, "step ahead" refers to the step ahead comprehensive early childhood grant program established by section 11 of this chapter.

*As added by P.L.1-2005, SEC.32.*

#### **IC 12-17-19-10**

##### **"Step ahead county"**

Sec. 10. As used in this chapter, "step ahead county" refers to a county in which an eligible entity has been awarded coordination and implementation grants. The term may include more than one (1) county as provided in section 18 of this chapter.

*As added by P.L.1-2005, SEC.32.*

#### **IC 12-17-19-11**

**Establishment of program; purpose; administration of Child Care and Development Block Grant; state funding**

Sec. 11. (a) The step ahead comprehensive early childhood grant program is established to provide financial assistance and other incentives to eligible entities to implement, coordinate, and monitor eligible programs countywide.

(b) The division shall administer the Child Care and Development Block Grant under 42 U.S.C. 9858 et seq. received by the division in accordance with the guidelines established by the panel under section 18 of this chapter.

(c) The panel shall use available state funds to the extent the general assembly makes an appropriation under this chapter.

*As added by P.L.1-2005, SEC.32.*

**IC 12-17-19-12**

**Unexpended money does not revert to general fund**

Sec. 12. Unexpended money appropriated from the state general fund to carry out the purposes of this chapter does not revert to the state general fund at the end of a state fiscal year.

*As added by P.L.1-2005, SEC.32.*

**IC 12-17-19-13**

**Goals of program**

Sec. 13. The goals of step ahead are to:

- (1) identify and recognize the various eligible programs available in each county at federal, state, local, and private levels;
- (2) encourage coordination and cooperation among the eligible programs described in subdivision (1) and to discourage duplication of services;
- (3) provide comprehensive eligible programs countywide that are accessible to all eligible children and affordable to the children's parents;
- (4) recognize the specific service needs of and unique resources available to particular counties, develop statewide resource listings, and incorporate flexibility regarding the implementation of eligible programs;
- (5) prevent or minimize the potential for developmental delay in children before the children reach the age of compulsory school attendance under IC 20-33-2;
- (6) enhance certain federally funded eligible programs;
- (7) strengthen the family unit through:
  - (A) encouragement of parental involvement in a child's development and education;
  - (B) prevention of disruptive employment conditions for parents who are employed; and
  - (C) enhancement of the capacity of families to meet the special needs of their children, including those children with disabilities;
- (8) reduce the educational costs to society by reducing the need

- for special education services after children reach school age;
- (9) ensure that children with disabilities are integrated, when appropriate, into programs available to children who are not disabled; and
- (10) ensure that every child who enrolls in kindergarten in Indiana has benefited since birth from eligible programs available under step ahead.

*As added by P.L.1-2005, SEC.32.*

#### **IC 12-17-19-14**

##### **Step ahead statewide panel; establishment; membership; chairperson**

Sec. 14. (a) The step ahead statewide panel is established to implement the step ahead program.

(b) The panel consists of the following members:

(1) Six (6) members who:

(A) are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the governor; and

(B) are selected from representatives of the following state agencies:

(i) Division of mental health and addiction.

(ii) State department of health.

(iii) The division.

(iv) Budget agency.

(v) Division of aging and rehabilitative services.

(vi) Department of education.

(vii) Executive staff of the lieutenant governor with knowledge in the area of employment and training programs.

(viii) Executive staff of the governor.

(2) Five (5) members who:

(A) are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the governor;

(B) are representative of the private sector; and

(C) are knowledgeable in the field of early childhood development.

(3) Four (4) members who:

(A) are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the state superintendent of public instruction; and

(B) are knowledgeable in early childhood education.

(4) One (1) member who:

(A) is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the governor; and

(B) serves as the chairperson of the panel.

*As added by P.L.1-2005, SEC.32.*

#### **IC 12-17-19-15**

##### **Compensation of panel members**

Sec. 15. (a) The members of the panel who are state employees are entitled to reimbursement for traveling expenses and other

expenses actually incurred in connection with the member's duties, as provided in the state travel policies and procedures established by the Indiana department of administration and approved by the budget agency.

(b) Each member of the panel who is not a state employee is entitled to the minimum salary per diem provided by IC 4-10-11-2.1(b). A member who is not a state employee is also entitled to reimbursement for traveling expenses and other expenses actually incurred in connection with the member's duties, as provided in the state travel policies and procedures established by the Indiana department of administration and approved by the budget agency.  
*As added by P.L.1-2005, SEC.32.*

#### **IC 12-17-19-16**

##### **Panel utilization of division personnel**

Sec. 16. The panel may use the personnel employed by the division to assist the panel in implementing this chapter.  
*As added by P.L.1-2005, SEC.32.*

#### **IC 12-17-19-17**

##### **Rules**

Sec. 17. The panel may adopt rules under IC 4-22-2 to implement this chapter.  
*As added by P.L.1-2005, SEC.32.*

#### **IC 12-17-19-18**

##### **Panel powers and duties**

Sec. 18. (a) The panel shall do the following:

(1) Establish guidelines to implement this chapter that comply with the regulations governing the distribution of the Child Care and Development Block Grant under 42 U.S.C. 9858 et seq., including guidelines on the following:

(A) Subject to the requirements under sections 20 and 22 of this chapter, the content of the application and step ahead proposal.

(B) The types of early childhood programs that are eligible programs.

(C) Income eligibility guidelines for parents who are unable to afford the services provided by eligible entities.

(D) Subject to the availability of funds, a schedule for awarding coordination and implementation grants and the criteria used to award those grants under this chapter, including the following:

(i) The degree to which available eligible programs are coordinated within the county under the proposal.

(ii) The extent of community commitment to step ahead initiatives.

(iii) The relative need for the county to become a step ahead county.

(iv) The extent to which multiple eligible programs and

services are collocated throughout the county, including public schools.

(v) The extent to which the school corporations within the county cooperate in step ahead initiatives.

(vi) The quality reflected by comprehensive programming for preschool services and the commitment to consistent staff training opportunities.

(vii) The extent to which proposed eligible programs provide integrated programs for children with disabilities and children who are not disabled.

(E) Any limitations in the expenditure of step ahead grants.

(F) Requirements for grant recipients or the step ahead county coordinator to report on the implementation of the step ahead programs within the county.

(G) The distribution of federal funds, including the Child Care and Development Block Grant under 42 U.S.C. 9858 et seq., and other available funds to eligible programs.

(H) Any other pertinent matter.

(2) Develop minimum standards for eligible programs.

(3) Review each step ahead application for a coordination grant and each proposal for an implementation grant submitted by the convener.

(4) Approve those proposals that comply with this chapter.

(5) Conduct the assessments of step ahead programs under section 24 of this chapter.

(6) Monitor the overall implementation of step ahead, encourage the collaboration through the department of education's early childhood division to promote consistency in state efforts for young children, and report to the governor on the implementation of step ahead.

(7) Any other task to facilitate the implementation of step ahead.

(b) The panel may contract for services to assist in the implementation of the step ahead program.

(c) The panel may designate as a step ahead county and step ahead grant recipient more than one (1) county if the participating counties:

(1) are contiguous to each other; and

(2) agree to jointly comply with this chapter.

*As added by P.L.1-2005, SEC.32.*

## **IC 12-17-19-19**

### **Child care services bureau contracts; advance funding provisions**

Sec. 19. Notwithstanding IC 4-13-2-20 and IC 12-8-10-7 and in addition to the authorization to enter into contracts for services under section 18(b) of this chapter, a contract issued by the division for programs administered by the bureau of child care services, including a contract for the administration of the programs authorized under IC 12-17-15 and this chapter, may include a provision for advance funding if the provision is not inconsistent with the terms of any applicable federal law or regulation and any of the following

conditions is met:

- (1) The annual contract amount is at least fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) and the advance funding is not more than one-sixth (1/6) of the contract amount.
- (2) The annual contract amount is less than fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) and the advance funding is not more than one-half (1/2) of the contract amount.
- (3) The advance funding is in the form of interim payments, with subsequent reconciliation of the amounts paid under the contract and the cost of the services actually provided.

*As added by P.L.1-2005, SEC.32.*

#### **IC 12-17-19-20**

##### **Requirements for receipt of coordination grant**

Sec. 20. In order for the eligible entities in a county to receive a coordination grant, the following must occur:

- (1) One (1) convener located within the county must submit to the panel, on or before August 1 of a year and under an agreement by the eligible entities in the county, an application for a coordination grant that:
  - (A) designates a step ahead county coordinator to facilitate the development of the proposal;
  - (B) designates a fiscal agent to receive the coordination grant; and
  - (C) includes any other information required under the guidelines.
- (2) Upon review of each application, the panel shall designate each step ahead county and shall award a coordination grant to the fiscal agent described in subdivision (1).

*As added by P.L.1-2005, SEC.32.*

#### **IC 12-17-19-21**

##### **Receipt of coordination grant; development and submission of implementation proposal**

Sec. 21. Upon receipt of a coordination grant, the step ahead county coordinator shall initiate the development of a detailed proposal to qualify for an implementation grant. The step ahead county coordinator shall submit the proposal to the panel on or before December 31 of the year in which the application is submitted.

*As added by P.L.1-2005, SEC.32.*

#### **IC 12-17-19-22**

##### **Implementation proposal; requirements**

Sec. 22. The proposal submitted under section 21 of this chapter must comply with the following minimum requirements:

- (1) Include a detailed description of the manner in which the eligible programs available within the county are to be implemented, coordinated, and monitored.
- (2) Certify that each eligible entity shall request and obtain a

limited criminal history on each prospective employee hired by the eligible entity.

(3) Designate a fiscal agent to administer the implementation grant.

(4) Demonstrate how at least the following eligible programs may be offered, coordinated, and monitored within the entire county under an agreement with the providers of the following eligible programs:

(A) Preschool, including Head Start under 42 U.S.C. 9831 et seq., special education preschool, or developmental child care programs for preschool children.

(B) Child care programs.

(C) The Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment program under 42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.

(D) Early intervention parent information programs.

(E) Individual family service plans.

(F) School age child care programs (commonly referred to as latch key programs).

(G) Student reading skills improvement grants under 20 U.S.C. 6361 et seq.

(H) Parental involvement programs.

(I) Child care programs aimed at serving children of teenage parents to encourage the teenage parents to graduate from high school or participate in vocational training.

(J) Vocational training programs for unemployed parents.

(K) Health, nutrition, and vaccination programs.

(L) State medical assistance services for eligible individuals under IC 12-15.

(5) Certify that the eligible programs described in subdivision (4) are provided at no cost to parents of children who qualify under the income eligibility guidelines and at an affordable or sliding fee for other parents.

(6) Describe the manner in which the implementation grant will be directed to and expended by eligible programs.

*As added by P.L.1-2005, SEC.32.*

### **IC 12-17-19-23**

#### **Distribution of implementation grants; priority for continued state funding**

Sec. 23. (a) The fiscal agent for the implementation grant may distribute the implementation grant received under this chapter in accordance with the approved proposal.

(b) If an eligible entity received state funds to implement an eligible program before becoming a step ahead eligible program, the eligible entity shall be given priority with regard to receiving continued state funding to implement the eligible program under this chapter with no break in continuity of service from the prior year.

*As added by P.L.1-2005, SEC.32.*

### **IC 12-17-19-24**



**Assessment of programs and services**

Sec. 24. (a) To evaluate the effectiveness of step ahead as the program relates to the step ahead goals listed in section 13 of this chapter, the panel shall employ the following assessment mechanisms:

- (1) The step ahead county coordinator shall annually report to the panel on the development, quality, and appropriateness of the individual family service plans for children whose parents qualify under the income eligibility guidelines.
- (2) The step ahead county coordinator shall annually report to the panel on the number of children who:
  - (A) are using step ahead services; and
  - (B) do not qualify under the income eligibility guidelines.
- (3) The panel shall annually assess the results of any readiness program under IC 20-20-26 for students in kindergarten and grade 1 to determine whether children enrolling in school after benefiting from step ahead demonstrate greater readiness for learning. The department of education shall cooperate with the panel in this regard by assisting in defining the term "readiness" and supporting the evaluation based on knowledge and training in early childhood.
- (4) Any other valid assessment technique or method approved by the panel.

(b) The panel shall implement a schedule for assessing step ahead programs, using prior evaluation results and techniques learned through the department of education's pilot preschool programs.

*As added by P.L.1-2005, SEC.32.*

**IC 12-17-19-25****Developmental child care programs for preschool children**

Sec. 25. (a) Each step ahead proposal must provide for the implementation of a preschool or developmental child care program for preschool children.

(b) The goals of the preschool or developmental child care program for preschool children are to:

- (1) enhance the child's readiness for learning and facilitate the transition from home to school when the preschool child reaches the age of compulsory school attendance;
- (2) identify developmental problems or concerns in preschool children and make referrals to the appropriate service providers or to provide the appropriate services;
- (3) prevent disruptive employment conditions for parents who are employed; and
- (4) ensure a continuity in access to step ahead programs as each preschool child nears the age of compulsory school attendance.

(c) To qualify for an implementation grant under this chapter for preschool or developmental child care programs for preschool children, the eligible entity implementing a preschool or developmental child care program for preschool children must demonstrate cooperation with the following programs within the

county:

- (1) Public schools, particularly those public schools that provide preschool or special education preschool services.
- (2) Head Start programs under 42 U.S.C. 9831 et seq.
- (3) Infants and toddlers with disabilities programs under IC 12-17-15.
- (4) County health department programs.
- (5) Private industry council programs.
- (6) Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) programs under 42 U.S.C. 1786 et seq.
- (7) Community mental retardation and mental health centers that provide services to preschool children with disabilities.
- (8) The county office of family and children.
- (9) Consumer representation groups.

*As added by P.L.1-2005, SEC.32.*